

**By William Wan**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/26/AR2009102603218.html>

Many advocates of religious freedom applauded Clinton's remarks on blasphemy laws, but some said the report did not go far enough in censuring or proposing action against countries with a track record of abuses or persecution on religious grounds.

"To date, President Obama has raised religious freedom in his speeches abroad without those sentiments being translated into concrete policy actions, and our hope is that this report will be the administration's call to action," said Leonard Leo, chairman of the **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom**, an independent federal agency.

The 1998 legislation that established the annual report on religious freedom created Leo's group -- a permanent, nine-member commission to advise the president and government -- as well as an ambassador at large for international religious freedom.

Knox Thames, acting executive director of the group, singled out the report's description of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Vietnam. "I think it could be stronger. In their Vietnam chapter, for instance, it completely ignores the issue of prisoners. It's believed several individuals are in jail because of their religiously motivated politics," he said. "We just think that's a mistake."